



Kieran C. Dunn

Procurement and supply chain operator. Direct materials and contract manufacturing inside a nine-figure portfolio, mostly with mid-size US manufacturers.

kieran.digital.dunn@gmail.com · linkedin.com/in/kierandunn · kierancdunn.com · Darien, CT (ET)

I am a working practitioner, not a consultant describing practitioners. I still carry a category, so the examples are current and the constraints are real, and I would rather be specific and wrong on air than vague and safe.

THE TALK: THE THREE PLACES FRICTION HIDES

01 Retrieval

Senior people spending the day finding numbers rather than deciding with them. It looks like diligence. It is the most expensive clerical work in the building, and it is almost always the largest of the three.

02 The wait

Work that is finished but not allowed to move, because approval lives in an inbox or a spreadsheet one person updates. Nobody is idle and nothing is progressing.

03 The re-argument

The same decision made from scratch every time, because nobody wrote the rule down. Teams mistake it for judgment; it is an undocumented policy costing a meeting a month.

TOPICS I CAN CARRY A FULL EPISODE ON

1. The 2026 tariff whiplash, and what a buyer actually does about it

IEEPA struck down in February, the Section 122 bridge expired in July, a new Section 301 forced-labor action took effect the same day across 60 economies. Three regimes in six months, and most cost models are still on the first one.

2. What reshoring actually costs

Moving contract manufacturing out of China is a data problem before it is a logistics problem. Site qualification, tooling transfer, and holding continuity of supply through the move rather than after it.

3. Why AI keeps stalling in procurement

Agents fail on weak data foundations long before they fail on reasoning. The unglamorous work that has to happen first, and how to tell whether a vendor is selling you past it.

4. The cost model nobody updates

Should-cost, consignment design, and the specific places landed cost goes wrong, including the Section 232 basis change most models have not absorbed.

5. Operator to orchestrator

What changes when a procurement team stops running on heroics and starts running on systems, and what a human still has to decide.

QUESTIONS A HOST CAN LIFT VERBATIM

- Your team says it needs more people. How do you know whether that is true?
- A supplier cites capacity pressure and asks for a price increase. How do you test the claim?
- What is the most expensive hour in a procurement department, and who is spending it?
- Everyone wants agents in procurement. What has to be true before that is even a sensible question?
- What is the difference between friction worth removing and friction that is load-bearing?

Kieran C. Dunn · kierancdunn.com

BIO , 25 WORDS

Kieran C. Dunn is a procurement and supply chain operator who manages a nine-figure direct-materials portfolio and builds the agentic systems that run the work around it.

BIO , 75 WORDS

Kieran C. Dunn has spent over a decade in manufacturing procurement inside a \$2B NYSE-listed global manufacturer, carrying a nine-figure direct-materials and contract-manufacturing portfolio. He has led an Asia reshoring program, mapped and engineered down Section 301 and IEEPA tariff exposure, and built a procurement Center of Excellence. He now designs approval-gated agentic systems over procurement data, and arc he calls operator to orchestrator. He holds an MBA from the University of Connecticut.

FORMATS

Keynote or conference talk

30 to 45 min, stage or virtual

Podcast guest

45 to 60 min, remote

Panel discussion

30 to 60 min, will hold a position

Industry moderator

45 to 90 min, pre-briefs included

In-house workshop

Half day, on site or remote

PRACTICALITIES

Time zone

US Eastern; flexible for EU mornings

Lead time

Two weeks preferred, less if the news warrants it

Prep

I send current figures and sources ahead of the recording

What I will not do

Name my employer, my suppliers, or anyone's commercial terms

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